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OF THE

Committee of the Christian Vernacular Education Society for India,

ADDRESSED TO THE

DIRECTORS OF ALL MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

LABOURING IN THAT COUNTRY.

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"Unity and love prevail amongst the different divisions of the Protestant family. We no longer maintain the old and fatal mistake, that Christian men are not to co-operate for *any* thing, till they agree in *every* thing. We now hold the antagonistic and true maxim, that Christian men should act together so far as they are agreed."—*Sermon preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, on July* 27, 1857, *by the late Right Rev.* DANIEL WILSON, *Bishop of Calcutta.*

The Christian Vernacular Education Society for India.

THIS Society was established in the year 1858. It was intended as an appropriate memorial of the Indian Mutiny, and owes its origin to such devoted friends of missions as the Rev. Henry Venn, the Rev. William Knight, Dr. Tidman, the Rev. William Arthur, Dr. Underhill, and others, who thought that a new educational Society would very considerably lighten the labours of all Missionary Societies, and would materially assist them in carrying on their beneficent enterprise in India. The plan proposed was to form a Society composed of members of the various sections of the Church of Christ for the purpose of concentrating effort on the education of the people of India in their own vernacular tongues.

A meeting was held for this purpose at St. James's Hall on May 20, 1858. Representatives from most of the great Missionary Societies were present, and much enthusiasm for the undertaking was expressed. The following extracts from the speeches made on this occasion show the hopes which were then entertained.

The Earl of Shaftesbury, the President, who was in the chair, and who has presided at almost every anniversary meeting since, thus defined the objects of the new Society :—

"I would impress upon you the extreme importance of such a Society as one remarkably adapted to the exigencies of the times, and remarkably adapted to the requirements of India. The style and title of the Society which we propose to found to-day is this: 'The Christian Vernacular Education Society for India;' and the primary object of the Society shall be—to establish in the great towns of India Christian Vernacular Training Institutions, male and female, and to supply in each of the native languages of India school-books and other educational works prepared on Christian principles, and each Training Institution to comprise a Vernacular Model School.

"In point of efficiency, I think there can be no doubt of the importance of using the vernacular languages. You will make this a specialty; you will make the business of the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress a specialty; and the moment you make it a specialty, and get a body of persons devoted exclusively to that work, and a Society exclusively to attend to that body of persons, you will bring to bear all the experience, knowledge, power, energy, and zeal, which might otherwise be diffused over a great number of subjects, and you will find that the work will be better done, because I have no doubt that the native, when really and properly trained, will be a superior schoolmaster to the European, because he will have more time. He will start from a point from which the European cannot start; he will start with a knowledge of the tongue in which he is to teach; whereas years must be lost by the European in acquiring a knowledge of the language, which, when attained, will be very imperfect as compared with that of a native.

"The plan which we propose will give us another advantage. It will set at liberty our missionaries, and allow them to devote themselves almost exclusively to missionary work. They are, many of them, now dragged down; and find their most important labours impeded from the necessity of having to attend to the schools.

"Another part of the scheme is of essential importance, and that is the institution, not so much of Book Societies, as of a pure literature for India, either by original compositions in the vernacular tongues of a sound and wholesome character, or else by the translation of our best English works into the languages of the country. Be assured there is no one undertaking that is more likely to be effective, or better calculated to make an immediate result. If you could but introduce into India the same system which has been introduced here,—if you could but set up in Calcutta and other great towns an Association similar to that known by the name of the Pure Literature Society for the benefit of the people—in the course of a very short time indeed, the effect on India would be such that, to use a common statistical phrase, you would be able to cover the three provinces with the paper you would distribute every month."

Mr. J. C. Marshman, who had acquired a thorough knowledge of India by a long residence in that country, said :—

"I think that for some time it will be desirable to leave the establishment and superintendence of Vernacular Schools in India to other agencies. But in order to render schools efficient, it is necessary that we should have normal or training schools ; that we should have books to use in those schools ; and a thoroughly organized system of instruction. We require institutions in which natives shall be taught in the language in which they are to communicate through the schools to others. We require institutions in which the school-library, which is to form the material of instruction, shall be regularly, properly, and gradually matured and enlarged.

"It is more advantageous that we should have in each province in the country one great and thoroughly organized Training School than that each missionary denomination should have an inferior institution of its own in different parts of the country. For the present I should say that the Society might well confine itself to the object of having one great Training School in each of the Presidencies ; and that all the missionaries in India should be

requested to send their ablest youths to these institutions, to receive regular training in a system of instruction, and to obtain there that knowledge which they will have to communicate to others. This Society, therefore, by concentrating its efforts, may become the instrument of great good to India, by filling up a sphere of action which is now altogether vacant, and which we must supply if ever we expect to do our duty to that country."

The last extract is from the speech of that large-hearted man of God, the late Rev. Henry Venn.

"I conceive," he said, "that a question has occurred to every one of us, 'Is there any necessity for the multiplication of Societies? Is there any necessity for a new machinery to carry out the object now put before us? Or, are there existing organizations which are competent to do the work?' There are now three species of education in India. There is, first, the education of Christian converts. This Society does not propose to meddle with that department. Every Missionary Society will feel itself bound to provide for the education of the children of its own converts.

"There is a second kind of education going on in India; educating natives in the English language and in English literature. This second kind of education we do not propose as our object. English education will take care of itself in India.

"Then the third kind is, the education of the masses: the education which we speak of is vernacular: and this is the great field which it is proposed by this Society to occupy.

"But let us not lose ourselves in the vastness of that field. When we contemplate the education of such large masses as the people of India, the mind is apt to be overwhelmed; but the object of this Society is to set that education fairly afloat: it is to give a right direction to vernacular education by the institution of Normal Schools, which, if it pleases God to bless our efforts, will provide the seminal principle of this grand vernacular education scheme.

"Perhaps it may be thought the Missionary Societies will do this work. I think I can give two substantial reasons why it is impossible for any one Missionary Society, or for the whole of the Missionary Societies, working in their several departments, to

accomplish this work. The first is, that Missionary Societies having for their object the conversion of the natives, their interest and their funds would be always liable to be absorbed in the conversion and pastoral superintendence of adults, and of those Christian congregations which they have collected together. Missionaries, when they go into a new country, begin with the education of the heathen; but, as soon as it pleases God to give them converts, their interest in it begins to flag.

"The second reason is, that the different Societies are labouring in different parts and in different languages, and we therefore need a central Society to which all may refer.

"I fully concur in the sentiment that, if the vernacular education of the heathen be taken out of the hands of the Missionary Societies, whereby they might be left to their more peculiar and more important work, it would be a great blessing."

The two great branches of the operations of the new Society were:

1. The training of native schoolmasters.

2. The preparation of school-books and of Christian literature in the vernacular languages.

These two branches of work have been steadily kept in view during the quarter of a century which has elapsed since the Society was established; but three collateral objects, being part of the same design, were subsequently added.

(*a*) A system whereby some of the indigenous schools of Bengal have been brought under Christian instruction and supervision. Native Christian inspectors are appointed to examine, under missionary superintendence, such indigenous schools as have voluntarily been placed

under these inspectors, and to impart instruction in Holy Scripture. This is called the Circle System.

(*b*) Certain elementary schools were established in the vicinity of the Training Institutions and elsewhere. Most of these have lately been handed over to other Societies owing to want of funds.

(*c*) Colporteurs have been employed to circulate the Society's books.

A few books have been published in English, such as the admirable series of "Readers" prepared by Dr. Murdoch; and other books intended for translation, such as A.L.O.E.'s charming little tales; but the grand object of reaching the people through the medium of their own languages has been carefully borne in mind.

Training Institutions have been established in capital linguistic centres :—

1. At Amritsar, the religious capital of the Punjab.

2. At Ahmednuggur, in the midst of the great Mahratta nation.

3. At Dindigul, almost in the centre of the Tamil-speaking people.

The experience of the last six-and-twenty years proves that this Society has not been adequately supported by the great Missionary Societies. This shows one of two things—either the object proposed by the founders of this Society was based on a miscalculation, or the managers of the Missionary Societies have not availed

themselves of it to the extent which they might have done.

In the matter of training native masters it was hoped that all the Societies working in the vicinity of each Training College would be greatly benefited by sending men to be trained in it, and that thus they would be relieved of this important, but arduous, branch of missionary labour, and their resources set free for more direct evangelistic work. It was anticipated that men would be sent to be trained; maintained, either wholly or in part, while being trained; and employed when they left the College fully trained and prepared for scholastic work. The following statistics will show that this has not been the case to the extent desired:—

AHMEDNUGGUR.

During the five years from 1878 to 1882 inclusive, 60 students left the Institution and were employed as below.

By the	American Board of Foreign Missions . .	41
„	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel .	11
„	Scotch Mission at Poona	1
„	Presbyterian Mission, Ratnagiri	2
„	Church Missionary Society	1
„	Canadian Mission, Mhow	1
„	C.V.E.S.	3
		60

Dindigul.

55 passed through the Institution during the above five years. They were employed by

The American Board of Foreign Missions. . . .	22
Church Missionary Society.	8
Wesleyan Missionary Society	3
The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel . .	2
Lutheran Mission	1
Not stated	9
C.V.E.S.	9
Died	1
	55

Amritsar.

The statistics for the above five years could not be obtained from Amritsar; but the Principal writes regarding the present time thus :—

"I wrote to every Missionary in the Punjab, and did not get one Christian boy sent in. . . . How shall we find work for all whom we train? Seven men passed the Senior Vernacular Examination held at Lahore in July last. These have therefore finished their course with us. After writing all over the Punjab I have only been able to get four of these men employment."

This Society has been the means of doing much good, but the Committee feel that it could do a great deal more if it were more heartily appreciated and supported. They consider that the present is a most opportune moment to lay the whole state of the case before the

managers of the great Missionary Societies, with a view to the objects of the founders of the Society being more completely carried into effect. They would urge upon the Committees of those Societies what invaluable assistance might now be rendered to their Societies. They believe that all missionary agencies would thereby be benefited and strengthened. They would respectfully claim that this Society be recognized as *a great Christian Educational Society for India;* that it be regarded by each Missionary Society as its own valued coadjutor; that some small portion of the funds of these Societies be given to it in recognition of its help; that missionaries be encouraged to send those native Christians who propose to devote themselves to the work of education among their fellow-countrymen to the nearest C.V.E.S. Training College, should there be one within a reasonable distance, that they be maintained during the time of their training there, and received back for employment when they have been trained. There is room not only for three Training Institutions; but for several. There should now be one in each linguistic and missionary area, or in each province of the Empire.

Most of the great Societies have at least one representative on the Committee of the Christian Vernacular Education Society, and attendance at the meetings of the Committee would give additional tone and vigour to its administration, and tend to keep the managers of the

Societies fully acquainted with all its plans and operations. The Committee would further suggest that this Society might be mentioned in the Reports and publications of each Society, and the missionaries and the constituents informed of the great aid which it might thus afford to their educational work in India. Much valuable interest would thus be concentrated on this Educational Society, and the arm of each Missionary Society would be left free for its more immediate and proper work, namely, evangelization of the heathen and the organization of the native Churches.

Again, in the literary department of this Society's work, the great Missionary Societies can render invaluable assistance. The Committee are fully persuaded that one of the great wants of India is a good, sound Christian literature, thoroughly Oriental and thoroughly Indian, written in clear, simple, idiomatic prose: not so much translations, as original works, which, composed, perhaps, in one vernacular, can be easily rendered into the others. Very much has been already done in this respect, and the Committee can point with pleasure not only to translations of Miss Tucker's beautiful little tales and tracts, but also to original books such as those prepared by the Rev. T. K. Chattarjya, Babu J. B. Battacharjya, Mrs. Sattianadhan, and others; but much more is required, and the great Missionary Societies can give essential

help in this matter. The preparation of Christian literature in the languages of the people should be no mere by-work. It ought to be done systematically and thoroughly. To this end organization is required. System and harmonious action are necessary. Intercommunication between the various Societies is wanted. Certain men should be set apart solely for this great work, and the native Churches cordially invited to co-operate with them. When suitable books have been prepared, they might be presented to this Society or to the Religious Tract Society for publication.

One important subject may here be mentioned. It is most necessary that Christian text-books should be used in all missionary Anglo-Vernacular schools. Dr. Murdoch has prepared an admirable Series of English Readers, which he has carefully corrected after extensive travels through India, China, Japan, and the United States of America with the object of studying the best models and bringing the information down to the latest researches of educational science. These books have received the approval of some of the most eminent educationists and missionaries of the present day. It is respectfully suggested to the managers of mission schools that they might be used universally in preference to "Readers" prepared by the educational officers of Government, or those published in England, which have frequent allusions and references to English

customs which Hindu boys cannot appreciate or understand.

The Committee most earnestly press on the directors of all Missionary Societies the importance of taking full advantage of the present grand opportunity in the matter of education. A Commission on education has lately considered the whole subject with the greatest care, and the Government of India have issued a Resolution approving of the principal recommendations contained in its Report. The result of this inquiry is that primary education will receive more careful attention than it has ever received before. The instruction of the people in their own languages is the chief point aimed at. Will the Church of Christ hold back at this crisis? Shall nothing be done to take advantage of this opening? Shall it be said hereafter that no effort was made to turn the channel of education into a Christian course? Action on the part of those interested in the welfare of India is imperatively required. The education of the people of India is the aim of the Government. Will Christians not step forward and aid them? Liberal grants-in-aid are specially promised to all who help in the working of normal schools. Will there be no response?

Very much zeal has been aroused in the happy enterprise of zenana missions. The Committee of this Society cordially wish it God-speed. But good books

are required for use in these missions, and but few have been prepared. The C.V.E.S. is ready to step forward and assist in the preparation and publication of such books, and the Committee are anxious that those engaged in that sacred work should look on the Christian Vernacular Education Society as the reservoir from which they can draw a continuous supply of the clear water of a pure and sparkling literature suitable for Indian zenanas. Support and help are requested for this purpose.

The present is a critical period in the history of this Society as well as in that of the Christian Church in India, and the Committee place the whole matter fully and frankly before the successors of those who established it. Shall a Society which was founded with such enthusiasm be permitted to languish for want of adequate support? Rather, will not those Societies who helped to found it rally to its support, and make it what it ought to be, *the* great Educational Society for India, and an honoured instrument in bringing about that grand consummation for which so many noble-hearted men have toiled and laboured and prayed, when the Church in India, purified, strengthened, and consolidated, shall be one of the brightest jewels in the Redeemer's crown.

By order of the Committee.

E. B. UNDERHILL, *Chairman.*

HENRY MORRIS, *Honorary Secretary.*

February, 1885.

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